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who has not only crossed the continent, but has passed through the whole length of Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to the mouth of the Nile. But the essential part of his work will have been done before he reaches the Nile, and he may safely return towards Zanzibar, if so minded, with laurels sufficient to constitute him the greatest of all explorers, and the African traveller *par excellence*. You see I am very sanguine that our friend is still alive. The manner in which we obtained the testimony was very satisfactory. In the first place, I picked up the news amongst the native traders. I then addressed the caravan people, and drew out their story while they were unsuspecting of its interest; so that neither Hurdee traders nor Suaheli men had an object to tell lies, nor any idea of how to act if they wished merely to please. Besides, our conversations were carried on without an interpreter, and, although making no pretence to a full knowledge of the language, I knew quite sufficient to be able to express myself, and dispense with that fertile source of confusion, an interpreter. I need not repeat all we heard; most of what is important will be published before this reaches England. With the prospect of letters from Livingstone so near, we may well refrain from all speculation on the subject of his geographical discoveries.

“J. KIRK.”

The President added that on the receipt of these letters he had written to Lord Stanley, who had informed him that no despatches from Zanzibar had reached the Foreign Office at present. He had no doubt before the next meeting of the Society all these despatches would be received. He was sure there could be very few persons who would not participate in the sanguine hopes he entertained that their dear friend, Dr. Livingstone, would not only return to them, but, as Dr. Kirk said, covered with the laurels which he would have so gloriously won.

Mr. JOHN CRAWFURD thought the information they had just received was somewhat more satisfactory than the former tidings. Still he confessed that he did not see in the information all the satisfaction that the President seemed to feel. He had a very high opinion of Dr. Kirk, and thought he was one of the best observers who had ever travelled in Africa; still, he must plainly say, that he was yet disposed to place considerable reliance on Moosa. There was one part of the information communicated on the former occasion on which he wished to make a remark, and that was the photograph which the native carrier was said to have recognised for Livingstone, out of several that were shown to him. Now he held it to be totally impossible for a native African, unaccustomed to pictorial representations, to pick out a particular portrait of a white man, dressed, as he represented, in European costume with a white cloth round his head.

The following Paper was then read:—

Sketch of a Journey through the Interior of China, from Canton to Hankow. By A. S. BICKMORE, Esq., M.A., Massachussetts.

THE author left Canton on the 7th August, 1866, with the intention of following a route proposed for a future railway to Hankow, *via* Quei-lin and the banks of the Siang affluent of the Yang-tse. Travelling up the Si-Kiang to Wu-chau, he ascended the Cassia River to Hingnan, and near that place found that this northern affluent of the Canton River was connected by an artificial canal with the great Siang River flowing northward into the Yang-tse. Being autumn,

and the season unusually dry, the upper courses of both the Cassia and the Siang were encumbered by rapids; at other times he believed it would be possible to travel from Canton, through the interior of China, to Shanghai in the same boat. Near the populous city of Quei-lin Mr. Bickmore narrowly escaped massacre at the hands of the unruly populace, notwithstanding the protection afforded him by the mandarins. The whole country had been in a state of anarchy since the Tae-ping rebellion, and even boats belonging to the Imperial Government, with mandarins on board, were frequently plundered by hordes of ruffians on the banks of the river. Henceforward his Chinese guides kept him closely confined in his boat, that he might escape observation and reach the Yang-tse in safety. The canal connecting the Yang-tse Basin with that of the Si-Kiang can only be used by boats drawing 2 feet of water. The water is kept in by dams built across wherever a rapid would occur, and allowing an escape only through a small gap, deep enough for a single boat to pass. At Sichang, on the Siang River, are situated the principal coal-mines of the region, and some fifty boats were seen loading. The mines are nothing more than deep pits in the sides of the hills, and consequently only surface-coal is obtained. It is to be expected that better coal would occur below the water-level, but as soon as the miners come to water they are obliged to abandon the mines for want of proper pumping apparatus. From Sichang to Moukden, north of Peking, there is a continued series of coal-mines on the flanks of the elevations that form the western border of the great plain. A striking spectacle was presented, on arriving at the Tung-ting Lake, at the junction of the Siang with the Yang-tse. A heavy northerly wind had been blowing for six or seven days, and few or no boats had been able to proceed. A southerly breeze then set in, and all the boats that had been harbouring in the many creeks and bays came out, and at sunrise such a sight was obtained as could only be seen in a land where the population is numbered by the hundred million. As far as the eye could reach the surface of the lake was thickly feathered with white sails, some in sunshine, some in shadow, and some in the dim distance, apparently gliding on a thin film of air above the water. Four hundred and forty boats were counted in sight at one time. The Poyang Lake, lower down the river, is of the same character. It has been noticed that these great lakes have near them a group of high mountains: this is only another way of stating that where there has been an unusual elevation there has been a corresponding depression.

This Paper will be published entire in 'Journal,' vol. xxxviii.

The PRESIDENT asked the Society to return their hearty thanks to the author of the paper,—a young American gentleman, who had accomplished a most remarkable journey. Mr. Bickmore had been a pupil of Agassiz, and had travelled in the East for scientific purposes. Leaving Boston some four years ago, he had traversed nearly the whole of the Eastern Archipelago, including the island of Sumatra, upon which it was his intention to communicate another paper to the Society at some future day. He had finished his extensive travels by making this remarkable journey through the interior of China, described in the paper, visiting Japan, and crossing Siberia on his way to Europe. He arrived in this country about a fortnight ago, and it was his intention to be present at the last meeting of the Society, to read his own paper,—one of the most interesting memoirs that had been brought before them for many years. On the eve of the meeting, however, he found that he should be obliged to leave at an early hour, in order to catch the steamer at Southampton on his return to America, and thus we had been deprived of the advantage of hearing him personally. The information in the paper was of great importance to our commercial community, because we are about, next year, to have a new treaty, and should probably have opportunities of opening out a more extensive commercial intercourse with China. Mr. Bickmore had described in the most graphic manner the desolation and barbarism of those provinces over which the Taepings had extended their devastations. That state of things, fortunately, had passed away, and we might hope that the empire of China was now recovering. Mr. Bickmore was the first European who had performed this journey *viâ* the Cassia River and the canal leading to the Siang affluent of the Yang-tse, at least we had no record of any previous traveller.

Mr. JOHN CRAUFURD said he had a great respect for the enterprising gentleman who was the author of the paper. In the course of his travels he had crossed the island of Sumatra, one of the largest in the world, and one of the least known, had visited Java and the Moluccas, and, after this remarkable journey through China, had visited Japan, the Kurile Islands, and the Russian settlements on the Amoor. He had no doubt Mr. Bickmore would publish a full account of his travels. He had shown us what a singular people the Chinese are. While the Taeping rebellion had been going on, our trade with the country had been from year to year increasing, such was the extraordinary perseverance and wonderful industry of these people. He believed our commerce with China exceeded that of other countries, American and European. It amounted to 40,000,000*l.* of annual imports, and about the same total of exports. But it would be a long time, in his opinion, before there would be any railways in China. A project had been recently brought forward for a railway from India through Burmah into China. Such a line would have to traverse, for several hundred miles, the two worst provinces in China—Yunan and Kwangsi—before it could reach those districts from which we procured the two great staples of China, tea and silk. It would be impossible to carry out the project, and he hoped the British public would not be disposed to invest their money in Chinese railways. He was happy to think that Mr. Bickmore's labours had received the approbation of the Society. He hoped to see a further paper from him, for he was sure it would be as worthy of attention as the one which had just been read.

Mr. Bickmore had sent the following letter to the President, on leaving England :—

“Hamburg Steam-ship *Borussia*, Southampton,
Nov. 26, 1867.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I should be doing myself, and my many American friends, a great injustice, were I to leave your shores without earnestly expressing to you, and asking you to express to the honourable body of which you are the President—

and through them to the public—my deep sense of gratitude for the many kind attentions I have had the honour to receive at the hands of many of Her Majesty's officers during my travels in China and Japan.

"I am especially indebted to Vice-Admiral George King, who at that time commanded Her Majesty's fleet in those seas, for an open letter, addressed to all the captains under his orders, asking them to receive me on board and take me to such places as they might be visiting, whenever I wished to avail myself of the privilege.

"I sincerely trust that when any English gentleman is travelling within our borders, or on seas frequented by our navy, for scientific purposes, he may receive the same polite attention.

"I shall further ask you, if you deem it proper, to read this note when my paper comes before your Society, and deposit it in your archives.

"With many thanks for your personal attention during my late visit to London, and an expression of my highest consideration,

"I have the honour to be, your obedient servant,

"ALBERT S. BICKMORE."

"Sir RODERICK I. MURCHISON, Bart., President of the
Royal Geographical Society, London."

ADDITIONAL NOTICES.

(Printed by order of Council.)

1. *Extension of Electric Telegraph Lines in Queensland.*

THE various surveys which have been made during the last two years in connexion with the extension of the telegraph system in Queensland have done much towards completing our geographical knowledge of the northern parts of this extensive and important colony, besides promoting the settlement of the country. The object of the promoters of these surveys is the eventual connexion of the 9000 miles of the Australian telegraph system with lines from Europe *via* India and the Dutch settlements in the Malay Archipelago. It is satisfactory to note that even in Queensland the telegraphs pay already about 2 per cent. on the capital expended. The following is an extract, bearing upon the subject, from the Report of Mr. W. J. Cracknell, the Superintendent of Electric Telegraphs in Queensland, dated May 1, 1867:—

"I cannot refrain from pressing on your consideration the desirability of commencing, at the earliest possible moment, the proposed extension of the northern lines from Bowen, Port Denison, to the Gulf waters. On the 19th of March, last year, the late Mr. Frederick Walker was despatched from Rockhampton, with a well-equipped party, to explore the country between the east coast and the Gulf of Carpentaria, for the purpose of discovering the most eligible route for the proposed extension to Burketown. Taking a final departure from Townsville, Cleveland Bay, he so far effected the object of his mission by a cursory survey from that point to the Gulf settlement; but, unhappily, to the loss of the public service, whilst with like purpose returning thence by a different route to Cardwell, Rockingham Bay, he died in camp at Floraville, Leichhardt River, on 19th November, 1866. In consequence of Mr. Walker's illness and death, his journal and papers are incomplete, and, in